

doos, Turks, Feather Idolaters, and Mumbo Jumbo, Log and Fire Worshippers—who want churches, your modern English Evangelical sect is the most absurd, and entirely objectionable and unendurable to me! All which they might very easily have found out from my books—any other sort of sect would—before bothering me to write it to them. Ever, nevertheless, and in all this saying, your faithful servant, JOHN RUSKIN."

This characteristic reply conveys its own moral. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Was Ruskin right? To some who are yet clothed and in their right mind, a church in debt is one of the most unsightly excrescences on the fair face of Nature—a sore which but one plaster can cover. Need it be named? It is an everlasting memorial to the parsimony of man. It is a cenotaph on which is inscribed the ironical legend of its alien souls—too mean to pay their expenses to heaven. But after the letter it is little wonder that the modern Evangelical sect had small faith in Ruskin. Yet this man had in fifty-seven years *given away* \$550,000!!

Yet another sin of Ruskin's with another class of self-elected pundits—his style in writing is too ornate and discursive, or it is effeminately sentimental, he lacks chasteness:

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
thou shalt not escape calumny.

Well, the chaste style is an admirable one—for certain themes. It is suited to its subject, as is apple sauce to roast goose, as is a certain cackling and hissing to the goose that is not roast. We have admirable examples of the chaste in literature, living and dead, at least one in this broad Dominion, unique in his way, but Goldwin Smith brought his style with him

from the fair banks of Iris, as did Ruskin take his, only from another fount to set it whirling and eddying on its wonderful way by another channel.

But, after all, is chasteness in style everything? One can imagine a chaste style as assumed by some when describing a snow-man or an idiot boy,

That like his bard confounded night with day,

or the tossing of a pancake on Shrove Tuesday; but what about an Italian sunset, an Alpine thunderstorm, a tropic landscape? There is a sort of chasteness known to the initiated as prudery. There is a style in literature called chaste, which might be dubbed, with far greater truth, prudish. It is the style affected by the man of poor vocabulary. It is self-contained like an oyster between its bivalvular walls; denseness and prejudice. It is restrictive. It permits itself no flights to Elysium. The inky Styx is ever before it, and between its fingers. It is cold, cowering in the bowels of the commonplace rather than soaring to the regions of the Iris. It is dull and utterly prosaic, like salt cod fish on Good Friday. It is chaste because it has to make a virtue of necessity. Never having known passion it lacks the faculty of desire, and is therefore impotent as regards virility of expression. But it assumes airs and from the icy pinnacle of its continency prates to the sunbeam, renounce thy light, thy splendour is offensive, it savours of incontinency, become as one of us. Truly a fitting epilogue to the fable of the fox without a tail!

This stickler for the chaste and the common-place can see no beauty in a figure, can permit no scope to his ideality. He takes everything *straight*, like his "sour wine" aforementioned. "Fact, fact, Sirs, fact!"